

# KERN REGIONAL BLUEPRINT PROGRAM TOWN HALL MEETING—PHASE 2

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## S U M M A R Y   R E P O R T

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### TEHACHAPI--STALLION SPRINGS October 9, 2007

#### I. INTRODUCTION

On Tuesday, October 9, 2007, Kern Council of Governments (COG) hosted a Town Hall Meeting for the Kern Regional Blueprint Program at Tehachapi High School in Tehachapi. The purpose of the meeting was: (a) to educate participants about the purpose of the Blueprint; (b) to provide results of Phase 1 outreach efforts regarding the visions, values, and top issues for the future; and (c) to present and facilitate discussion and collect input about draft principles and draft illustrative “scenarios” for future growth.

#### **Background**

Kern COG is an association of city and county governments primarily created to address regional transportation issues. Its member agencies include the County of Kern and the eleven incorporated cities within the Kern Region and ex-officio members representing Caltrans, Golden Empire Transit District and the Congestion Management Agency.

The Town Hall Meeting is one of a series throughout the Kern Region as part of the Kern Regional Blueprint Program, which is designed to engage policymakers and citizens to create a regional vision and growth principles for the integration of transportation, housing, land use, economic development and environmental protection that will inform local decision-making and guide growth over the next 50 years. **The Kern Regional Blueprint is not a City General Plan or a County Specific Plan; it is a 2050 visioning project designed to complement other planning processes.** Elected officials from the County and each city throughout the Kern region will determine how their jurisdictions will accommodate the regional vision through local decision-making and planning efforts. The Kern Regional Blueprint will also be included as part of the Central California Blueprint Program, which will integrate the outcomes of the Blueprint programs from the seven other Central California counties.

Phase 1 of the outreach process focused on introducing the Blueprint Program, developing a regional vision for the future of the region and its communities, and understanding the participants’ priority issues related to growth. Phase 2 of the process is focused on developing principles for future growth and a preferred

illustrative scenario for development in each sub-region, all of which builds from the regional vision and priority issues developed in Phase 1.

### **Community Outreach**

To build community awareness of and involvement in the Blueprint Program, Kern COG initiated an extensive outreach program as part of these Town Hall Meetings, which will carry and expand into future phases of the process. With outreach and coordination support from Odyssey, a California-based nonprofit organization focused on transportation policy improvements, Kern COG implemented a number of outreach measures to advertise the meeting, including:

- Direct phone calls to a broad range of community-based organizations including business, social service, cultural, and other interests;
- Targeted mail and email of a project newsletter and meeting notice;
- Coordination with government agencies' outreach efforts and networks;
- Inserts in local and community-based newsletters and media publications;
- Media campaign.

These efforts will continue to build Kern COG's outreach database over time, leading to ever-expanding outreach measures in future phases of the process.

### **Town Hall Meeting Agenda and Format**

The Tehachapi meeting was held from 6:00 p.m. – 9:00 p.m. at the Tehachapi High School Cafeteria, 801 South Dennison Street in Tehachapi. Upon entering the meeting facility, participants signed-in and received a nametag and handout materials including an agenda, comment form, and evaluation form (handout materials may be found at [www.kerncoq.org](http://www.kerncoq.org)). Approximately 55 community members representing residents, businesses, local government agencies, and community-based organizations attended the meeting.

Participants then reviewed the “open house” portion of the meeting, which featured display materials of local area maps and data related to existing conditions and future growth projections, as well as other general information from Kern COG. Andy Pendoley from Moore Iacofano Goltsman, (MIG) Inc. served as the meeting facilitator and initiated the meeting with brief welcoming remarks and an agenda overview. He then recognized local officials in attendance: Stan Beckham, Councilmember, City of Tehachapi; David James, Director of Planning and Community Development, City of Tehachapi; Sonia Wilson, Planning Commissioner, City of Tehachapi; Glen Mueller, Tehachapi Cummings Valley Water District; Chuck McCullough, Cummings Valley Protective Association; and introduced Kern COG Assistant Director Darrel Hildebrand.

Mr. Hildebrand delivered brief introductory remarks describing the relationship of the Blueprint to local planning activities followed by a slideshow presentation that provided an overview of the purpose of, need for, and process for developing the Blueprint. The slideshow included results of the Phase 1 Town Hall Meeting in

Tehachapi including the sub-region's visions and values. The slideshow also introduced the draft principles for growth in the Kern region, which provide guidance and direction about how to manage future growth, as well as illustrative pictures to further describe each principle's meaning and intent.

Mr. Pendoley then reviewed the format of the small group discussions before convening participants to their randomly assigned groups. After brief introductions among the participants, a facilitator at each small group table guided participants through a discussion of participants' reactions to the draft principles. As a discussion tool, the facilitators introduced a "card game," which is designed to allow participants to share their beliefs of how effective each principle would be in achieving the visions for future growth. The small group facilitators recorded participants' discussion points and the card game tallies during the small group discussion on flip chart pages, and participants also recorded comments on their own comment forms, all of which are summarized in the following pages of this report.

Following this small group discussion, participants heard a brief presentation from Robert Ball, Senior Planner with Kern COG, regarding draft "scenarios" for future growth in the sub-region. Mr. Ball explained that each of the four scenarios represented varying levels of compact development, or the amount of development that is focused on existing urban areas. He also provided data regarding performance measures for each scenario, including the relative change in air quality, energy use, water consumption, and other measures.

Mr. Pendoley then asked participants to reconvene in their small groups to review the scenarios and data in more detail, which were provided as handouts and on large posters at each small group table. He asked that each participant indicate their preferred scenario and to share their ideas and reasons as part of the small group discussion. The small group facilitators guided these discussions and recorded comments on the flip chart pages, and participants also recorded comments on their own comment forms, all of which are summarized in the following pages of this report.

Participants then reconvened in the large group format to hear brief summary reports from a volunteer from each group regarding the Draft Principles and scenarios. Mr. Pendoley facilitated the discussion and also recorded a summary of the reports on large wallgraphic paper at the front of the meeting room, which is attached to this report as photo-reduced copy on page A1.

The following pages summarize comments captured on the wallgraphic and flip chart pages from the small group discussions, as well as those submitted by participants on comment forms. Original copies of these documents are on file with Kern COG.

## II. DISCUSSION: DRAFT PRINCIPLES

Participants discussed the draft principles in terms of their beliefs of how effective each would be in achieving the visions and values for future growth. The small group facilitators asked participants to provide any overall comments about draft principles, and then proceeded to review each principle in turn.

Each participant received a set of five cards as part of the “card game.” The facilitator explained that the suited cards represent levels of effectiveness in achieving the visions for future growth. The suited cards were labeled as:

- **♠ Spades** represent “No effect”
- **♥ Hearts** represent “Small effect”
- **♦ Diamonds** represent “Moderate effect”
- **♣ Clubs** represent “Major effect”
- **“X”** represents “Delete this principle”

As the small group facilitator introduced a draft principle, each participant raised the card that represented his belief in the effectiveness of the principle. After tallying the results on the flip chart pages, the facilitator asked participants to comment on why they played their respective cards, which the facilitator recorded on the flip chart pages. The facilitator also encouraged participants to record their card play and associated comments on their comment form. Following is a summary of card game results and participants’ comments on each principle:

### ***Use compact, efficient development and/or mixed land uses***





Participants suggested that this principle is most appropriate for urban areas such as Tehachapi, but areas such as Stallion Springs and Cummings Valley should remain rural. Participants supported

♣ Major effect	♦ Moderate effect	♥ Small effect	♠ No effect	X Delete
<b>34</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>2</b>

compact development in existing urban areas and Downtown Tehachapi to use resources more effectively and create more walkable areas, but should also include efforts provide walking and biking trails surrounding the urban nodes. Some participants suggested that such development should attract a mix of incomes to avoid creating concentrated poverty. Participants also encouraged implementing sustainable design practices. Other participants suggested that development in rural areas should remain focused on nodes already identified.





***Provide a variety of housing choices***

Most participants suggested that expanded housing choices are necessary for all community members, particularly affordable options such as apartments and condominiums for young adults and retired persons. Some participants suggested that expanding housing choices and types would contribute to limiting sprawl, which could be directed through general plan policies. Some participants also suggested that housing developments should be closely linked with workforce housing needs and employment centers. Participants also encouraged smarter, low-energy housing designs and a “village” design concept. However, some participants expressed concern about providing subsidized and high-density housing that could result in increased crime rates. Other participants suggested that market forces would be the primary driver of housing demand, or that home ownership is not necessary or desired for all community members.

 Major effect	 Moderate effect	 Small effect	 No effect	<b>X</b> Delete
<b>22</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>0</b>





***Provide adequate and equitable services***

Participants indicated that comprehensive services are important to maintaining quality-of-life, health and education. Some participants advocated for increasing education standards and the community’s overall level of education through community college facilities and/or classes, as well as library services and facilities, all of which would support a more positive community environment and lower crime rates. Other participants indicated the need to mitigate transportation costs, provide more local medical services, provide youth services near school sites, increase services to the growing elderly population, and maintain service levels that keep pace with population growth and needs.

 Major effect	 Moderate effect	 Small effect	 No effect	<b>X</b> Delete
<b>38</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>

***Use and improve existing community assets and infrastructure***

As noted previously, participants encouraged focusing improvement efforts on existing urban areas and Downtown, and preserving the integrity of rural areas. Participants suggested a range of infrastructure needs such as water and sewer treatment, performing arts, and museums. Some participants indicated the need to preserve historic assets and utilizing or creating multi-functional facilities. Additional suggestions included expanding public communications infrastructure, such as local television services.

 Major effect	 Moderate effect	 Small effect	 No effect	<b>X</b> Delete
<b>34</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>

***Provide a variety of transportation choices***

Participants noted a range of issues related to transportation choices. Participants suggested urban areas would benefit from more choices compared to outlying and rural areas. Some participants suggested that inter-community services may be of benefit, as well as dial-a-ride services, particularly for senior citizens. Some participants expressed concern that extending Metrolink passenger rail service to the area and expanding the local highway to 4 lanes could spur additional growth. Other participants suggested that transportation planning should be closely linked to land use planning, while others encouraged more bicycle and walking paths.

♣ Major effect	♦ Moderate effect	♥ Small effect	♠ No effect	X Delete
<b>6</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>

***Enhance economic vitality***

Participants supported the need to spur new business development, particularly by focusing on job growth and training that serves current residents and provides opportunities for young adults.

♣ Major effect	♦ Moderate effect	♥ Small effect	♠ No effect	X Delete
<b>26</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>0</b>

Some participants suggested that high quality higher education opportunities would spur economic development in the area. Other participants suggested the wording of the principle is confusing and should be clarified.

***Conserve energy and natural resources, and develop alternatives***

Water emerged as the primary discussion point regarding resource conservation including the need to conserve, consider new levels of regulation, and manage the water basin. Some participants

♣ Major effect	♦ Moderate effect	♥ Small effect	♠ No effect	X Delete
<b>43</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>

questioned whether the projected population growth could be accommodated by the current water availability. Other participants suggested the need enact solar energy requirements, energy-efficient facilities and communities, and new wind power mechanisms.

***Conserve undeveloped land and spaces***

Participants indicated the importance of conserving ecology, habitats, watersheds, wildlife, wildflowers, open spaces, agricultural spaces, and the diverse mountain areas, with some noting

♣ Major effect	♦ Moderate effect	♥ Small effect	♠ No effect	X Delete
<b>45</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>

that these elements improve quality-of-life and the desirability of the area. Some noted the importance of preserving military air space and the base's economic

benefits to the area. Others noted that conserving undeveloped land and spaces will contribute to overall land use planning efforts and help control sprawl.

***Increase civic and public engagement***

Participants suggested that early involvement and enhanced publicity and outreach are important to increasing civic and public engagement, as well as preserving community values. Some

♣ Major effect	♦ Moderate effect	♥ Small effect	♠ No effect	X Delete
<b>28</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>

participants stressed the need to prevent secret meetings and to publicly record all public meetings. Other participants called upon future civic leaders and public agencies to honor today’s visions for the future to ensure that public engagement efforts are not a waste of community members’ time.

**III. DISCUSSION: DRAFT SCENARIOS**

Following Mr. Ball’s presentation of the draft scenarios and associated performance measures for the sub-region, participants indicated their preferences for the draft scenario of compact development and associated performance measures that best reflect the visions for growth and appropriate level of implementation of the draft principles. The four scenario options included:

- **No change**, or maintaining development patterns as projected in today’s local land use planning policies
- **Some change**, or some increase in compact development
- **Moderate change**, or a moderate increase in compact development
- **Major change**, or a major increase in compact development

After tallying participant’s preferences for scenarios, the small group facilitator asked participants to comment on their choices, which the facilitator recorded on the flip chart pages. The facilitator also encouraged participants to record their scenario choice and associated comments on their comment form. Following is a summary of participants’ scenario choices (with tallies noted next to the scenario names) and comments:

***Major Change (10)***

Participants emphasized that growth should be focused only in existing urban areas while preserving rural areas, open spaces and agricultural spaces. Participants supported “village” style developments and “building up, not out,” though other participants expressed concerns about building too high, such as four-story buildings. Other participants emphasized the need to preserve community character.

***Moderate Change (23)***

Again, participants emphasized the need to focus growth in existing urban areas and to protect rural areas and assets. Some participants believed that this scenario supports energy conservation and preserving historic assets, while others emphasized the need to utilize and improve existing infrastructure. Other participants indicated the need to improve schools, expand health care and medical services, and to provide new housing options. Some participants suggested creating clusters of mixed economic housing and populations to control crime.

***Some Change (14)***

Participants supported this scenario as a way to prevent development of high rise or four-story buildings. Some expressed concern with apartment-style buildings as out of character for the area. Again, participants emphasized the need to focus growth in existing urban areas and to protect rural areas and assets. Some participants indicated that this scenario could support reduced impacts on ecology and habitats, while others suggested the need to use resources wisely.

***No Change (0)***

Participants did not support this scenario as it allows growth to spread to far into rural areas and does not conserve resources adequately. Some participants supported the scenario in the sense that it preserves low density development, best reflects maintaining today's community character, and prevents the type of changes that increase crime and traffic.

**ADDITIONAL ISSUES AND COMMENTS**

Participants provided additional comments during the small group discussions and via comment cards.

***Growth management***

- Water quality and access will be major drivers of growth
- Must take cautious approach to growth
- Increase police enforcement to reduce crime rates
- Must have mix of housing options to support high density
- Growth should come from necessity not speculation
- Need to address how to preserve rural nature with future growth
- Many people seem to think increased density will impact their properties and way of life despite most of it occurring as infill
- With the continued growth in the community, it is encouraging to have an opportunity to educate the community about the importance of compact development
- Preserve current development pattern in Stallion Springs, but pursue moderate changes in Tehachapi
- Focus on needs of 18-30 year olds
- At what point are we at population saturation?

***Planning process***

- Ensure that planning principles are maintained and implemented in the future
- Reflect comments from Phase 1 meeting
- Provide more specificity on infrastructure needs
- Develop a common ground with the community for growth, quality-of-life and maintaining the community's small town atmosphere
- Focus on developing consensus
- Increase community education on growth issues, smart growth principles, water issues and development rights
- Discussion framework not very applicable to Stallion Springs
- Presentation of Phase 1 results was adequate
- Phase 1 discussion was more effective
- Process is technocratic with pre-drawn conclusions
- Discussion was too limited
- We don't want any more growth, compact or otherwise
- We support compact development for others but it's not for me

KERN COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS  
KERN REGIONAL BLUEPRINT PROGRAM

**Town Hall Meeting**  
TEHACHAPI  
OCTOBER 9, 2007

▷ APPROPRIATE FOR URBAN  
▷ V. VALLEY: COMPACT AREAS  
▷ V.S. SPRINGS STAY RURAL!  
▷ COMPACT, EFFICIENT DEVELOPMENT AND/OR MIXED LAND USES  
▷ URBAN SUSTAINABLE DESIGN  
▷ BE SMART!  
▷ PROVIDE OPTIONS!  
▷ AFFORDABLE HOUSING  
▷ PROVIDE A VARIETY OF HOUSING CHOICES  
▷ FOCUS ON NEW TRENDS  
▷ AFFORDABLE HOUSING  
▷ LINK TO WORKPLACE  
▷ AFFORDABLE HOUSING  
▷ PROVIDE ACCESS AND EQUITY CHOICES  
▷ INCREASE EDUC. LEVELS  
▷ NEED COMPREHENSIVE IMPROVEMENTS  
▷ VILLAGE TRENDS  
▷ TRANSPORTATION  
▷ USE AND IMPROVE EXISTING COMMUNITY SPACES AND INFRASTRUCTURE  
▷ FOCUS ON EXISTING URBAN AREAS  
▷ PROTECT RURAL AREAS

34 11 4 2  
22 20 6 2  
38 6 9 1 1  
34 4 3

▷ ADDRESS METRO-LINE EXTENSION  
▷ DOUBLE 4-LANE HI-WAYS  
▷ INTER-COMMUNITY SYSTEM  
▷ DIAL-A-RIDE  
▷ CHOICES IN URBAN AREAS  
▷ LOW IMPACT RURAL OUTLYING  
▷ ENCOURAGE THE DEVELOPMENT OF WATER  
▷ CLARIFY WORDING  
▷ CONSERVE ENERGY AND NATURAL RESOURCES AND DEVELOP ALTERNATIVES  
▷ CONSERVE UNDEVELOPED LAND AND SPACES  
▷ INCREASE CIVIC AND PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT  
▷ PROMOTE PUBLICITY & OUTREACH

4 3 8 1 1  
4 3 8 1 1  
15 0 1 1 1

▷ FREIGHT CONTACTS?  
▷ NEEDED FOR?  
▷ YES?

▷ UNIQUE NEEDS: RURAL VS. URBAN

▷ SUPPORT SENIORS' GROWING HOUSING NEEDS.  
▷ WATER: WHAT CAN WE SUPPORT?!



▷ MAJOR CHANGE 10  
▷ PRESERVES OPEN SPACES & RURAL  
▷ TOO MUCH BUILDING HEIGHT?



▷ INFRASTRUCTURE IMPROVEMENTS  
▷ MODERATE CHANGE 23

▷ NOT TOO URBAN!  
▷ SCHOOLS IMPROVED  
▷ NEW HOUSING NEEDS  
▷ SUPPORTS ENERGY CONSERVATION  
▷ HEALTH CARE & HOSPITAL



▷ SOME CHANGE 14  
▷ LESS IMPACT ON ECOLOGY & HABITAT



▷ NO CHANGE 5  
▷ PUSHES GROWTH TOO FAR OUT  
▷ POOR RESOURCE CONSERVATION  
▷ PRESERVE LOW DENSITY!



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